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071559Z Feb 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DINT-00
	DODE-00	DOT-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/010W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8185  
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000662

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR WILLIAMS  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL. 02/05/11  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: MUGABE PROBABLY WILL WIN ILLEGITIMATE ELECTION IN  
2002

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REF: HARARE 644

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL IRVING. REASONS: 1.5  
(B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE RESEARCH FELLOW BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS TOLD CHARGE AND POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF ON FEBRUARY 1 THAT, IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, ZANU-PF WILL EMPLOY INCREASED VIOLENCE AGAINST THE OPPOSITION PARTY MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC), INDEPENDENT MEDIA, AND JUDICIARY, AND WILL WORK TO NEUTRALIZE THE LABOR MOVEMENT AS A KEY SOURCE OF SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR THE MDC. PRESIDENT MUGABE, RAFTOPOULOS BELIEVES, WILL SECURE VICTORY IN 2002 BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY, AND THE MDC MUST DECIDE NOW HOW IT WILL RESPOND TO MUGABE'S WINNING AN ILLEGITIMATE ELECTION. FOR ITS PART, THE MDC SHOULD FOCUS ON GETTING ITS SUPPORTERS REGISTERED, ENSURING AN ACCURATE VOTERS' ROLL, AND MOBILIZING RURAL VOTERS, AS WELL AS CULTIVATING SUPPORT WITHIN THE ARMY AND POLICE. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, ACCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF AND LABOFF, MET ON FEBRUARY 1 WITH BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS, RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE'S INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND AN ASTUTE OBSERVER OF ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL SCENE.

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3. (C) ACCORDING TO RAFTOPOULOS, ZANU-PF WILL EMPLOY A MULTI-FACETED STRATEGY IN PREPARATION FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2002. FIRST, HE SAID, THE MID-JANUARY PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION IN BIKITA CONFIRMED THE RULING PARTY'S DETERMINATION TO USE A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION TO COW OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS AND REVEALED ITS INTENTION TO USE TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO MOBILIZE THE PARTY'S SUPPORT BASE. THE PARTY, HOWEVER, DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO DEPLOY ITS SHOCK TROOPS OF WAR VETERANS AND RENT-A-THUGS NATIONWIDE, AND WILL LIKELY TARGET ITS CAMPAIGN MOST INTENSELY IN THE PROVINCES OF MASHONALAND AND MASVINGO.

4. (C) THE RESEARCH FELLOW SAID HE FULLY EXPECTS ZANU-PF TO CONTINUE TO INTIMIDATE THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND TO CREATE AS DIFFICULT AN OPERATING ENVIRONMENT FOR THEM AS POSSIBLE, LIKELY INVOLVING BOTH PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL HARASSMENT. HE POINTED TO THE JANUARY 28 BOMBING OF THE

PRINTING PLANT OF THE INDEPENDENT "DAILY NEWS" AS THE OPENING SHOT IN THIS COMPONENT OF THE CAMPAIGN. IN ADDITION, RAFTOPOULOS PREDICTED THAT ZANU-PF WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESSURE THE CURRENT JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT INTO LEAVING SO THAT THEY CAN BE REPLACED WITH MORE SYMPATHETIC JURISTS. (COMMENT: EMBOFFS SPOKE WITH RAFTOPOULOS THE DAY BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHIEF JUSTICE GUBBAY'S FORCED RESIGNATION, REPORTED REFTEL. END COMMENT.)

15. (C) RAFTOPOULOS SAID HE EXPECTS ZANU-PF WILL SHORTLY TURN UP THE HEAT ON THE MDC'S LEADERSHIP. THE POLICE, HE  
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NOTED, CONTINUE TO HOLD OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PROSECUTING MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI FOR HIS REMARKS IN OCTOBER PREDICTING THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE WOULD BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE VIOLENTLY BY AN ANGRY, FRUSTRATED POPULATION IF HE DOES NOT DEPART OF HIS OWN ACCORD. RAFTOPOULOS ANTICIPATED THAT ZANU-PF LIKELY WOULD ALSO "GO AFTER" OTHER KEY OPPOSITION OFFICIALS, INCLUDING YOUTH LEADERS. (NOTE: RAFTOPOULOS'S PREDICTION PROVED PROPHETIC, AS THREE SENIOR MDC LEADERS, INCLUDING THE OPPOSITION PARTY'S NATIONAL YOUTH DIRECTOR, WERE ARRESTED AND OR/BEATEN FOUR DAYS LATER, ON FEBRUARY 5. END NOTE.) IN ADDITION, THE RULING PARTY IS ACTIVELY SEEKING TO NEUTRALIZE THE LABOR MOVEMENT AS A SOURCE OF SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR THE MDC (DETAILS OF THE CONVERSATION RELATED TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT ARE REPORTED SEPTTEL).

16. (C) ASKED HIS PREDICTION OF THE LIKELIEST SCENARIO FOR THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, RAFTOPOULOS STATED WITHOUT HESITATION THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE WOULD WIN AN ILLEGITIMATE ELECTION. CLARIFYING, RAFTOPOULOS SAID THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT TO WIN A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION, SO WILL ACHIEVE VICTORY "BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY." IN THE MEANTIME, IF THE HIGH COURT ORDERS THE HOLDING OF BY-ELECTIONS IN RESPONSE TO PENDING LEGAL CHALLENGES BY THE MDC TO THE RESULTS IN 37 CONSTITUENCIES IN LAST JUNE'S

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	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02
	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/010W		
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 000662

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ELECTION, MUGABE WILL LIKELY WORK TO MARGINALIZE PARLIAMENT AND GOVERN PRINCIPALLY BY DECREE.

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17. (C) ZANU-PF'S TACTICS OF INTIMIDATION AND HARASSMENT, RAFTOPOULOS CONTENTED, MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE MDC TO DEVELOP SLOWLY AND PATIENTLY INTO A GENUINE, MATURE, AND EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION PARTY. THE MDC DOES NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES EITHER TO CONFRONT HEAD-ON STATE-SPONSORED VIOLENCE OR TO CONTEST EFFECTIVELY NUMEROUS BY-ELECTIONS. THE MDC, RAFTOPOULOS SUGGESTED, SHOULD THUS FOCUS ITS CAMPAIGN STRATEGY ON SEVERAL KEY ISSUES. FIRST AND FOREMOST, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PARTY PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO ELECTION MECHANICS, PARTICULARLY GETTING ITS SUPPORTERS REGISTERED AND ENSURING THAT THE VOTERS ROLL IS

COMPILED IN A TRANSPARENT AND ACCURATE MANNER. THE MDC MUST ALSO WORK HARD TO MOBILIZE OLDER RURAL VOTERS, WHO HISTORICALLY HAVE VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR ZANU-PF.

18. (C) RAFTOPOULOS SAID HE DID NOT HAVE A GOOD FEEL FOR THE ARMY'S POSITION ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT THE MDC SHOULD BE WORKING TO NURTURE ALTERNATIVE VOICES WITHIN THE MILITARY AND POLICE. THE OPPOSITION PARTY, RAFTOPOULOS CONTINUED, MUST ALSO ACCEPT THAT MUGABE WILL MAKE GOOD ON HIS VOW NEVER TO PERMIT THE MDC TO RULE ZIMBABWE, AND STRATEGIZE NOW HOW IT WILL RESPOND IF THE PRESIDENT STEALS THE 2002 ELECTION.

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19. (C) RAFTOPOULOS BELIEVES THAT ZIMBABWEAN OFFICIALS, UP TO AND INCLUDING PRESIDENT MUGABE, WERE RELIEVED BY LAURENT KABILA'S DEATH, AS THE ASSASSINATED CONGOLESE PRESIDENT HAD BECOME A PROBLEM FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING HIS SADC ALLIES, AND HAD POSED THE PRIMARY OBSTACLE TO PEACE. HE SURMISED THAT GOZ OFFICIALS CONSIDERED THE ASSASSINATION AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO WITHDRAW ZIMBABWEAN TROOPS AND WOULD NOW PRESS AGGRESSIVELY FOR THE QUICK DEPLOYMENT OF THE REMAINDER OF MONUC FORCES. HE AGREED THAT ZIMBABWE SEEMS TO HAVE ABDICATED THE UPPER HAND IN THE DRC TO THE ANGOLANS. ONE OF THE PRIMARY DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR IN DRC IS INCREASING REPRESSION HERE, AS THE GOZ SEEKS TO DENY THE MDC THE ABILITY TO CAPITALIZE ON WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT AMONG ZIMBABWEANS OF THEIR GOVERNMENT'S ENTANGLEMENT IN THIS COMPLICATED CONFLICT.

COMMENT

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110. (C) RAFTOPOULOS IS ONE OF ZIMBABWE'S BEST THINKERS AND HAS AN UNCANNY KNACK FOR PREDICTING EVENTS THAT COME TO PASS. BECAUSE HE IS NOT IDENTIFIED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY AND IS ABLE TO STEP BACK FROM THE FRAY, WE CONSULT HIM TO FILL LACUNAE IN OUR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ZIMBABWE. AT THIS WRITING, WE AGREE WITH HIS ASSESSMENT THAT MUGABE COULD WELL WIN IN 2002, AMASSING THE NECESSARY MAJORITY OF VOTES IN HIS TRADITIONAL BEDROCK OF SUPPORT, THE MASHONALAND-MASVINGO AXIS, AND IN INTIMIDATING LARGE NUMBERS OF OPPOSITION

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SUPPORTERS IN THE URBAN AREAS, THE MDC'S STRONGHOLD, INTO STAYING HOME ON ELECTION DAY. BARRING SOME EXTERNAL SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM AND ALL OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, THIS LOOKS LIKE A DEPRESSINGLY WINNING STRATEGY FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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